

THE NVH OBSERVER

N O R F O L K V E T E R A N S H O M E

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

GOVERNOR:
DAVE HEINEMAN

VETERANS' HOMES DIVISION
DIRECTOR:
JOHN HILGERT

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:
KERRY T. WINTERER

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From The Desk of Jerry Eisenhower NVH Administrator

Greetings,

With the New Year in full swing, it has been very busy here at the Norfolk Veterans Home. Our annual From The Heart Celebration for our members was held on Friday, January 22nd. Both staff and members had a wonderful time and a heartfelt THANK YOU! goes out to the From The Heart Committee and everyone who gave up their time and energy to once again make this event a huge success.

Governor Dave Heineman visited NVH on January 28th to present Renee Tichota, Floor Cleaning Specialist with an award for winning the Statewide "Walk This Way" Program for wellness. Renee has walked over 4 million steps since the programs inception in July of 2009. Renee and her husband, Ken, an inspector for the State Department of Agriculture, stepped up their physical activity and changed their eating habits after noticing how they had let their fitness go while dining on fast-food and concession-stand meals while raising their kids. Congratulations to Renee and "Keep on Trucking". Senator Mike Flood and Veterans' Homes Division Director John Hilgert were also present for the celebration.

With the legislature back in session we are watching intently to see the potential effect of bills on our State budgets. We will be doing everything in our power to continue to provide quality care for our current and future members.

Sincerely,

Jerry Eisenhower
Administrator

VOLUNTEER CORNER

JENNY LAST, VOLUNTEER SERVICES COORDINATOR



Mayor Sue Fuchtmann was the guest speaker for January's Red Hat gathering. The ladies were tickled to host Mayor Sue!

The annual New Year's Party was a success for the State AL, ALA, VFWA, Good Time Bunch and the American Legion Riders who helped put this party on. The Members had hats and noise makers, mocktails, great snacks and everyone went home from the party with a prize.

We would like to wish all of our friends and family a happy and healthy 2010.



THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON . . .

Anyone interested in
volunteer opportunities at
the
Norfolk Veterans Home
contact
Jenny Last
Volunteer Service
Coordinator
Phone: (402) 370-3102
E-Mail:
Jenny.Last@nebraska.gov



The From the Heart Committee for their version of a "Night at the Classics". Every year this committee of employees raises money to host a magnificent evening of fine dining and live entertainment for our Members and their spouses. This year the committee served prime rib, twice baked potato and sweet potato, creamed peas with pearl

onions, spring salad and dinner rolls. And for dessert they were treated to apple dumplings and cinnamon ice cream. While the Members dined they were able to enjoy the beautiful music of the Norfolk High School Orchestra and the Part Time Trio. The Members really enjoyed the fantastic food, and thought the entertainment was out of this world.



The Members also realize all the extra work and planning that goes into this special evening for them and are very appreciative of everyone's time and talents. **Hats off to the committee and all that make this night possible!**

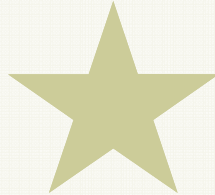


SALUTE OUR NEW MEMBERS

NORFOLK VETERANS HOME WELCOMES YOU

Childers, Neil

Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: 1954-1956
Hometown: Elgin, NE
Occupation: Farmer



Frank, "Earl" Lester

Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: 1952-1954
Hometown: Norfolk, NE
Occupation: Truck Driver

Sacca, Don "Skip"

Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: 1968 - 1970
Hometown: Waverly, NE
Occupation: Plastic Mold Tech

Buresh, Ernest

Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: 1953 - 1955
Hometown: Liegh, NE
Occupation: Farmer

THE NORFOLK VETERANS HOME IS A STATE OPERATED FACILITY PROVIDING
LONG TERM CARE FOR ELIGIBLE NEBRASKA VETERANS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING ADMISSION,
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR

LOCAL COUNTY SERVICE OFFICER
OR JOAN HULT @ (402) 370-3109

OR

COLLEEN BENSON @ (402) 370-3469

In Remembrance of Those Members Who Have Passed.

Although no sculptured marble should rise to their memory,
nor engraved stone bear record of their deed, yet will their re-
membrance be as lasting as the land they honored.

~Daniel Webster

Dale Weaver
David Senften

Woodrow Melena
Douglas Eichberger



NVH MEMBER EXPERIENCED VICTORIES BOTH ON AND OFF WWII BATTLEFIELDS



(Above) **Lt. Al Cerny** during WW II.
(Right) Cerny today with his wife **Dorothy**
and daughter **Alice Pracht** at the Norfolk
Veterans' Home during one of their frequent
visits.

Photo: Linda Sparr



Reprinted from *Connections* (January 2010)

The story of **Lt. Al Cerny** is the story of countless other ordinary young soldiers during World War II who went to war and accomplished remarkable things. Cerny is now a member of the Norfolk Veterans' Home.

During World War II, Lt. Cerny was put in charge of a platoon of African American soldiers at Fort Riley, Kansas.

During those years, the military was still segregated. Knowing that black soldiers had no place to gather during off hours and were unwelcome in town, Cerny found an empty barracks and personally repaired a broken pool table so that this platoon could relax and have some fun.

Cerny also organized a class to help those in his platoon who weren't literate so they could send letters home and read any letters sent to them.

On the wall of that barracks, Cerny painted a world map and drew a bomber above both the European and Pacific theatres. Whenever one of his men bought a war bond, he would paint a bomb dropping out of one of the aircraft with the soldier's name on it. The men were encouraged to purchase war bonds, and this caught the attention of those in authority. Shortly thereafter, Lt. Cerny was promoted from Second Lieutenant to First Lieutenant.

Asked then how he liked being in charge of black soldiers, Cerny said that they were among his best friends.

Cerny had good rapport with his platoon in Kansas but when shipped overseas to Italy where lives were on the line, he sensed they might not be as willing to follow as they had before. All that changed one day when the platoon moved into combat.

Unsure about his men's security, Cerny went ahead on his own to check out the situation. When he returned, the men were impressed that a white man would risk his life for them. After that, he said, they would follow him into the jaws of hell.

Continued on next page

VICTORIES

Continued from Page 4

"Dad was in a transportation group, which is funny since he didn't know how to drive when he entered the military," says **Alice Pracht**, Cerny's daughter. "His group was assigned to tear apart a jeep and put it together again. He said they succeeded, even though they had a handful of extra bolts when they got done."

The task for Cerny's platoon was to supply the front lines and return with dead or wounded soldiers. One time, a bomb fell directly in front of Cerny's jeep but did not explode.

"Otherwise, I wouldn't be telling you all this right now," says Pracht.

After Italy fell to the Allies, Cerny's platoon moved north with the advancing front line. As they advanced, his platoon helped move liberated prisoners of war back to their homes throughout a Europe that lay in ruins.

Cerny also had an artist's touch and sketched many scenes and portraits of his comrades. After the war, he earned a degree in Art at South Dakota State University and a Master's degree at Drake University in Iowa. His post-war career included teaching art in Iowa and supervising the art program in the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, public school system.

An ordinary man like countless others who went to war, Lt. Al Cerny created a record to be proud of by demonstrating leadership, helping break down the color barrier in the U.S. military, and exhibiting a talent for rendering his experiences through art and teaching others to do the same. Like all veterans, he also helped ensure the freedoms we all enjoy today.



Cerny's sketch of President **Franklin Roosevelt** that bore the inscription, "Our Commander-in-Chief, 60 Years, January 20, 1942."

Lt. Cerny conducts a reading class for members of his platoon in 1943 at Fort Riley, Kansas.



African American servicemen enjoy a game of pool in an area Lt. Cerny made possible for them.



Cerny's sketch of **Richard Lewis**, member of the platoon Cerny commanded.

NEW EMPLOYEES



Linda Anderson

Position: Staff Care Tech II
Shift: 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.



Kelly Ditter

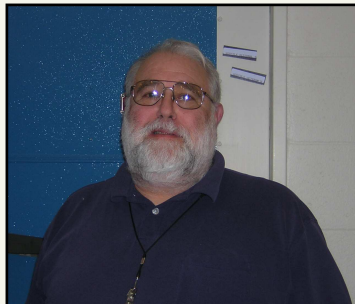
Position: Staff Care Tech II
Shift: 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.



Michele Sanchez

Position: Staff Care Tech II
Shift: 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.

MEMBER AND EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR & 1ST QUARTER



Congratulations to Member of the Year Bobbie Ragan and Employee of the Year Jenny Upshaw. (top row)

Member of the 1st Quarter for 2010 is John Clarkson and our Employee of the 1st quarter is Leon Herbolsheimer. (bottom row)

Congratulations to you all!

MORE FOR LESS

BY: NICOLE NIELSEN

N-Lighten Nebraska has become very popular in many towns across Nebraska. It even fell upon the staff here at the Norfolk Veterans Home.

N-Lighten Nebraska is a team wellness program conducted by the [Nebraska Sports Council](#). Our team here at NVH is called **More for Less**. Renee Tichota, our team leader, encouraged her fellow teammates to keep on track with eating better and increasing our daily exercise habits. She was the team leader for the spring session and also the fall session. We came in third place in the state during spring and Renee was then bound and determined we would come in first place for Active in Autumn. She pushed us to exercise more, not only to come in first place, but to make us healthier. And that's exactly what happened! We took home first place out of 143 teams in Nebraska and we all became a little healthier. Thanks Renee and N-Lighten Nebraska!



More for Less Members: (left to right) Diane Jacobson, Dennis Hintz, Nicole Nielsen, Renee Tichota, Tammy Mefford, DeAnn Stodola and Amy Schwartz

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...



Name: Robert Vern Wilson
 Branch of the military served: Coast Guard
 How many years of service: 2 years
 What was your occupation (military or afterwards): afterwards worked for Metropolitan Utilities Gas and Water of Omaha (MUD) and was also a heavy equipment haler and operator.
 Favorite past thing to do for leisure: Bingo
 Favorite Person or Best Buddy: My son David
 Favorite color(s): Blue
 Favorite song: any song by Johnny Cash
 Favorite ice cream: Vanilla
 Most memorable moment: Getting married
 If given the chance, what would you like to do over again? Finish college/ more education
 If you were king for a day, what would you do: Go flying
 What do you enjoy most about living at the Norfolk Veterans Home: You are kept busy with activities
 Can you give us some words of wisdom: Always be honest

Bits & Pieces

**CENSUS
147**

**Special
Occasion
Room**

**Reservations:
Call Activities @
(402) 370-3330**

**Join A Member
For a Meal
Only \$2.50
24 Hr. Notice
Please**

NVH EMPLOYEE HONORED



Pictured from left to right John Hilgert, Jerry Eisenhauer, Governor Dave Heineman, Renee Tichota and Senator Mike Flood.

Photo by Linda Sparr

Renee Tichota has walked over 4 million steps since July as part of the “Walk This Way” Wellness Program for State employees. Since she is in first place, she was recognized by Governor Dave Heineman and state Senator Mike Flood here at the Norfolk Veterans Home.

Program participants were asked to commit to walking 360,000 steps by the end of March. About 500 people have already walked over 1 million steps, 81 people have walked over 2 million steps and seven have gone over the 3 million mark. Renee is the only one who has reached and surpassed the 4 million mark, which means she’s almost walked around the entire border of Nebraska. Wow!

Renee and her husband started walking last March after they looked at a picture of them with their son before he left for boot camp to become a Marine. She said, “we got to looking at the picture and realized there’s more to us than what we wanted.” They now wake up at 5 a.m. and start walking. She started with one mile, which was tough, but now can walk over 10 miles a day and it doesn’t even faze her.

Governor Heineman is so proud that he made her an admiral with the mythical Great Navy of Nebraska to congratulate her success.

Way to go Renee!

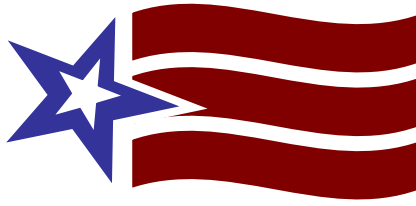
NVH Member Lloyd “Lynn” Cox takes a break from his work-out to greet and visit with Governor Dave Heineman.



Administrator Jerry Eisenhower gives Governor Heineman a tour of the Norfolk Veterans Home.

Governor Heineman and Senator Mike Food with NVH Member Marlyn Low.





Norfolk Veterans Home

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
[www.DHHS.NE.GOV/VETS/
NORFOLK/](http://www.DHHS.NE.GOV/VETS/NORFOLK/)



Mother Nature has certainly done some wild things this winter, but this eagle formation made from blowing snow is pretty amazing! This eagle head was found in Pod G's courtyard here at the Norfolk Veterans Home.

Norfolk Veterans Home Observer is published monthly
for the members, families, staff and other interested parties.

FOOD SERVICE WEEK

February 8th - 12th, 2010 has been designated "Pride in Food Service Week." This week applauds dietary managers and other members of the foodservice team for their hard work and dedication on the job. Please Thank our Dietary staff this week for all they do for our Veterans.

